

# Lester: Archdiocese schools could net half of new scholarships created by funding bill

 [dailyherald.com/news/20170904/lester-archdiocese-schools-could-net-half-of-new-scholarships-created-by-funding-bill](https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20170904/lester-archdiocese-schools-could-net-half-of-new-scholarships-created-by-funding-bill)

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Catholic schools in the Chicago Archdiocese could net half the scholarships created by a new tax credit in Illinois' recently passed [education funding law](#), lawmakers tell me.

That's because the archdiocese, which covers Cook and Lake counties, features the highest concentration of private school students, they said. The law will provide an estimated 6,000 scholarships to students attending private schools next year.

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Details of the plan -- a few paragraphs of the 550-page legislation -- are up in the air.

"It's completely undefined and the definition will matter," state Sen. Don Harmon, an Oak Park Democrat, says.

The \$75 million annual program allows students from households earning less than \$73,000 per year to receive scholarships of up to \$12,280 apiece to a private school of their choosing, with more money available for special education students.

Donors, meanwhile, can give up to \$1 million per year and get a 75 percent tax credit on donations.

The Illinois Department of Revenue ultimately will determine how scholarships are distributed, with the legislation calling for a way that is "geographically proportionate to enrollment in private schools in the area."

## Increased chance to survive

The tax credit for private school scholarships comes as the Archdiocese of Chicago is launching a massive overhaul that will close parishes and schools in the years to come.

"As we look at the viability of our parishes and schools, this opens up a new element," Cardinal Blase Cupich tells me. "We can't predict how this is going to play out in terms of increased enrollment, but it is a new variable we should factor in. If a school ... is failing in terms of finance but not performance, it now has a greater opportunity to survive."

## Gliniewicz spurs law change

A new law stemming from the scandal involving former Fox Lake Police Lt. Charles Gliniewicz will prevent spouses from receiving public employee survivor benefits if they're convicted of a felony.

The legislation was sponsored by Republican state Rep. David McSweeney of Barrington Hills and state Sen. Pam Althoff of McHenry. Melodie Gliniewicz faces charges of money laundering, conspiracy and misusing charitable funds relating to the now-disbanded Fox Lake Police Explorers Post 300 youth program run by her late husband.

Her effort to receive the survivor's pension, which would amount to between 50 percent and 75 percent of her husband's \$96,000 salary at the time of his death, is on hold pending the outcome of her trial.

McSweeney says the law would apply to future cases, not to Gliniewicz. The police pension board, at the request of the Village of Fox Lake, has delayed determining Gliniewicz's benefits until after her trial, currently scheduled for mid-November.

The police lieutenant staged his suicide to look like murder in the line of duty as the financial irregularities were coming to light.

## **Pedestrian progress?**

About 30 percent of Arlington Heights residents work in town or in neighboring communities within easy cycling distance, says the [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#), which is promoting a plan to improve bike and pedestrian travel in the village.

The agency, which uses federal funds to work with towns on planning and development, will present its proposal to the village board Tuesday.

## **Eye of the apples**

As you head out apple picking, the city of Woodstock is declaring that it has the largest concentration of apple orchards in the state, with six nearby. The orchards -- [All Seasons Apple Orchard](#), [Homestead Orchard](#), [Lang's Orchard](#), [Meadowmoor Orchard](#), [More than Delicious Orchard](#) and [Woodstock Country Orchard](#) -- boast more than 20 apple varieties.

## **Best wishes for Emily**

Best wishes to Emily Kmiecik of Arlington Heights, who received a long-awaited bone-marrow transplant last week at the University of Chicago Medical Center and says, so far, she's in some pain but her body's responding positively.

The nursing student at [Harper College](#) -- and daughter of former Daily Herald human resources director Betsy Kmiecik -- was finishing clinicals at Lurie's Children's Hospital in Chicago last year when she learned her leukemia had come back. Her fight against cancer and efforts to freeze her eggs before undergoing treatment have gotten the attention of Chicago Cub Anthony Rizzo, himself a cancer survivor.